

# REGION 2 BI-WEEKLY

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## EXPERTISE AND COORDINATION: The FEMA Way

By Warren DeTemple

### Editor's note:

*Warren DeTemple, Region II's Technical Hazard Program Specialist, had an earlier life as a member of the New York Task Force#1 Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Team. Because of the totality of his experience, Warren recognized the need to integrate the National US&R Teams with the National Guard. After several meetings and planning conferences with Brian Rousseau of the NY Office of Fire Prevention and Control, and New York State's Vigilant Guard Planning Team, the idea of integrating the National Guard and US&R Teams together in a collaborated, multi-agency earthquake exercise was finally realized, with the operational portion of the exercise taking place in early November in Towanda, NY. Here is Warren's report.*

I traveled to upstate New York to act as a regional subject matter expert (SME), in order to observe and participate in the New York State-sponsored Vigilant Guard exercise. This full scale inter-agency deployment exercise, based on an earthquake scenario, involved the engagement of local, State, federal, and international search and rescue resources under the command and control of a New York State Urban Search and Rescue Incident Support Team. The exercise involved local structural collapse teams, State US&R, Federal US&R, and International US&R assets, as well as various military units working in a joint exercise designed to simulate various structural collapse environments.

The participating US&R assets ranged from fire department squad-level teams, all the way up to advanced teams as well as Type I, II, and III US&R task forces from throughout New York State, surrounding States and Canada. The US Army Corps of Engineers US&R Group also participated.

The military portion of the exercise took place November 2-5, 2009. The US&R portion of the exercise was conducted with one operational period on November 2 (0700-1900) using local fire department assets and for five (5) operational periods (60 hours) starting 0700 hrs on November 3, which combined local, State, Federal, and international assets.



During the day light operational periods, the exercise featured joint operations between military and non-military units USAR assets.

Throughout the exercise, I – as Region II's representative -- not only participated in the US&R portion (FEMA's primary mission), but also assisted in the coordination of the activities of other Federal partners – including Customs and Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, GSA, NOAA, and Army Corps Engineers – from the Erie County EOC.

Perhaps because I was a first responder so long, I know how important real coordination is. My work in Region II underscores this.





# REGION II: 2009 IN PICTURES









